

Retiree Report

July, 2003

A Quarterly Publication from the
Fairfax County Retirement Agency

3.6% COLA's Effective July 1, 2003

Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) of 3.6% for all retirees in the Employees' Police Officers and Uniformed Retirement Systems will be effective July 1, 2003.

The 3.6% base COLA reflects the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Washington area for the period ending March 31, 2003. According to the ordinances which govern the Systems, COLA's are set at the lesser of the Consumer Price Index increase for the previous year or 4%. Each Board of Trustees may also grant up to an additional 1% depending on the funds' available actuarial surplus. The Boards of Trustees for the Police Officers and Uniformed Systems did not elect to grant any ad hoc COLA this year and the Board of Trustees of the Employees' System was unable to grant any amount of the ad hoc COLA this year due to rules governing the financial status of the plans and the terms of the County Code regarding the ability to grant additional COLA's.

The 3.6% cost of living increase will be reflected in each retiree's July 31 check. COLAs apply to base benefits only – not Pre-Social Security benefits.

Please Note:

For members who retire with less than 12 months of service in Fiscal Year 2003, COLAs are prorated according to the following effective dates of retirement:

July 2, 2002 and October 1, 2002	75% of COLA amount
October 2, 2002 and January 1, 2003	50%
January 2, 2003 and April 1, 2003	25%
After April 1, 2003	0% COLA

Retiree Health Benefit Subsidy Change

Effective July 1, 2003

The Health Subsidy for General County employees who retire effective July 1, 2003 and beyond, and are eligible for the subsidy from Fairfax County, will be calculated according to years of service. Retirees age 55 and older and those retired on a service-connected disability, regardless of age, are eligible for the Retiree Health Benefit subsidy. For others, if you retire prior to age 55, your subsidy will go into effect when you turn age 55, using length of service at the time of retirement.

Members who retired prior to July 1, 2003, will receive no less than \$100 towards the cost of County health insurance. If you do not maintain health insurance coverage through Fairfax County, you are not eligible for a subsidy in any amount.

continued on page 2

What's Inside?

Spotlight on The Agency	2
CareFirst Help Desk	2
Trustee Tracking	3
Social Security Update	3
HIPAA NEWS	4
Retiree Association Information	5

Spotlight on The Retirement Agency



In March, **Philip R. Langham** joined the Retirement Agency staff as our new Deputy Director and Retirement Administrator. Prior to joining Fairfax County Government 2½ years ago, he retired from the United States Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Program, Analysis and Evaluation in the Pentagon, Washington DC. On the Secretary's staff, he was a Defense Resource Manager who spent many hours developing cost estimates for the acquisition of major weapon systems for the Department of Defense. He also spent three years on The Joint Staff at the Pentagon in the Program Budget Analysis Division supporting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He routinely provided financial advice to the Chairman on all Air Force related matters. Mr. Langham has held many significant job assignments in the military including Chief Financial Officer at Howard Air Force Base in Panama, South America.

After his distinguished military career, Mr. Langham retired and went to work for the Fairfax County Executive's Office of Partnerships where he was their Fiscal Administrator responsible for managing the Agency's financial operations. In his current position as the Retirement Administrator, his duties are to direct the day-to-day operations of the Retirement Office. Among his many initiatives, he is looking forward to improving customer relations and service within the Agency.

In his spare time, Mr. Langham enjoys tennis, basketball, and playing the saxophone. He is currently completing the Executive Master of Business Administration Program at Troy State University, Troy, Alabama. This degree will compliment his current Master of Public Administration degree from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington.



Often the staff in an office are just voices on the other end of the phone or a name you hear in passing. Each issue of Retiree Report spotlights one individual of the Retirement Agency staff in an effort to help you get to know them better.



Health Subsidy *continued from page 1*

Retirees currently receiving the \$100 subsidy will be grand-fathered at that level unless their years of service entitle them to receive a higher monthly subsidy as indicated below.

Commencement Subsidy	Age 55 Monthly	Age 55 Monthly
Age at Retirement:	< 65	> 65
<small>(Note: Subsidy payments for retirees over age 65 are adjusted for Medicare)</small>		
5 - 9	\$25	\$15
10 - 14	\$50	\$25
15 - 19	\$125	\$75
20 - 24	\$150	\$100
25 or more	\$175	\$125

CareFirst Help Desk in Benefits

A representative from CareFirst is available most days in the Benefits Office to handle claims issues for FairChoice+ BlueChoice and Blue Preferred PPO members. If you have claims questions or concerns, you may call the representative at (703) 324-3474. The help desk is located in Suite 258 of the Government Center. Appointments are recommended. If you have questions about enrollment, eligibility or deductions from your annuity, please call the Retirement Agency staff at 703-279-8200 or 1-800-333-1633.

Get to Know Your Trustees

While many retirees are familiar with their System's Board of Trustees, others may not know anything at all about the people who are charged with the proper operation of the System to which they belong. This quarter's column, features **Stuart Rakoff**, a Board of Supervisors appointed member of the Police Officers Retirement System.

Trustee Tracking

Stuart H. Rakoff was appointed by the Board of Supervisors as a public member of the Board of Trustees of the Police Officers Retirement System in June, 2002.

In his professional life, Dr. Rakoff is the President of Rakoff & Associates, an independent management consulting firm based in Reston. As a consultant he has assisted a variety of government and commercial organizations to address issues of strategic planning and human resource planning. His current focus is supporting the US Navy in developing strategic human resources plans and processes, including manpower utilization, compensation and retirement reform, and culture changes. Past clients have included the IRS, Census Bureau, Army, and General Services Administration. Dr. Rakoff served as Director of Manpower Planning in the Office of the Secretary of

Defense, where he was responsible for the development of policies and programs for the entire uniformed force. Prior to that he was an executive with one of the nation's largest multi-employer health and pension trusts, specializing in actuarial, budget and policy analysis.

Dr. Rakoff and his family moved to Reston in 1974 and have resided there since. His wife Roz is a clinical social worker in private practice. His son and daughter-in-law and two terrific grandchildren live nearby in Reston. Over almost 30 years in Reston he has served on a number of local organization boards, including Reston Interfaith and the Greater Reston Arts Center. When not working or at meetings, you can usually find him at the gym, deep in a book, or at the movies – or trying to keep up with the two little ones who call him grandpa.

Dr. Rakoff graduated from Colby College and received his PhD from the University of Minnesota.

Social Security **UPDATE!**

Apply for Social Security ONLINE

If you're thinking about applying for Social Security retirement benefits, think online! The SSA redesigned website makes it easier than ever before to file for retirement benefits over the Internet from the comfort of your own home. If you have questions about whether you qualify, or how much you can expect to receive, they have Internet tools to help you. Visit the [SSA.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) and [Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) websites to determine your full retirement

age, how much you can expect to get in monthly benefits and information that can help you decide when the time is right for you. The page also has information about working after you start getting retirement benefits, updates on other Social Security programs, Medicare facts and, of course, the user-friendly application for retirement benefits. You're only a click away. <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/r&m1.htm>

Retirement Agency

New Policy

Effective immediately, all requests made of the Retirement Agency must be made in writing by mail, fax or e-mail. i.e. change of address, change of beneficiary and requests for information must be in writing. Please call for forms if needed.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability & Accountability)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) has been around for years. As of April 14, 2003, however, the law's privacy provisions are in effect and every health care provider and every health plan has had to make significant changes in the way they deal with protected health information (PHI) in every phase of their operation. Patients now must receive a privacy notice each time they go to a health care provider, explaining how their PHI will be disclosed. They will receive similar notices in the mail from their health and dental plans. **While the law does not directly cover employers, it will change the way County employees are allowed to work with the health plans on behalf of the retirees who call with questions or concerns.**

You may always discuss with County Representatives:

- Enrollment issues.
- How the plan works, what is covered, co-payments, etc.
- Comments about plan design, service provided, etc.
- How to contact the plan, how to get HIPAA information, obtain an HIPAA authorization form or file a privacy complaint,

Please be aware that, due to federal privacy regulations, you will need to contact the plan directly for help with specific claims issues because the plans will not release any information about you to anyone else without your written authorization on a form provided to you by the insurance company.

Reminder:

Federal law generally requires individuals to submit an authorization form to the plan before the plan is able to discuss protected health information with anyone else. The form will list the specific information that the individual wants released (i.e. claim payment information about my visit to Dr. X on a particular date), to whom the information is to be released and the length of time the authorization is to be in effect. Some plans even require authorization forms before they will release information about the caller's spouse or non-minor children.

Forms are also available that will allow an individual to name someone else as their personal representative. Then the plan can release the member's PHI to that personal representative without restriction.

Here is the latest information from each of the plans about how to get authorization forms. Each company has slightly different policies.

- **FairChoice/BluePreferred:** Call Betsi Fuhrman at 703-324-3474 or customer service at 1-800-441-1164 to discuss any

claim issues or to get a copy of the authorization form. It is available on CareFirst's web page at: <http://www.carefirst.com/pdf/authorization.pdf>. Spouses will need authorization forms.

- **Kaiser:** Contact the medical records section of your Kaiser center to obtain the necessary authorization form or go to the Kaiser web site to download the form (<http://www.kp.org/locations/midatlantic/healthplans/brokers/authreleasemedinfo.pdf>). Authorization forms will always be required to discuss PHI with the Benefits staff and spouses.

- **CIGNA:** Members should contact customer service at 1-800-224-6224 to obtain a HIPAA authorization form. Customer service personnel state that they will discuss PHI with anyone who keys in the requested verifying information (i.e. zip codes, Social Security Numbers, etc.). The official policy, however, is that an authorization form is required before PHI is released to anyone not on the policy (i.e. spouses don't need authorizations.) If an authorization is needed, the member should contact customer service (it is not available on their web site yet but will be soon).

- **Aetna** (for Long-Term Care): Nothing is available on their website. Members should call Aetna at 1-800-537-8521 to get the HIPAA authorization form. Nothing will be on their web site. Authorizations will be required to get information on a spouse.

- **Dental Benefit Providers (DBP):** Member should contact customer service at 1-800-445-9090 to request an authorization form. Customer service will release PHI to the Benefits staff. Form is needed for spouse.

- **Dominion Dental:** Nothing about HIPAA is on their web site. They will not release PHI to County representatives (or even to a spouse) without a signed authorization form. Forms are only available by calling customer service at 1-888-518-5338.

For Privacy Complaints:

*Fairfax County HIPAA Compliance Manager
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 527
Fairfax, VA 22035
(703) 324-4136 — TTY (703) 968-0217
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hipaa/contact/>*

Retirement Associations

Keep your Retirement Association informed of address and phone number changes!

The Retirement Association regularly receives requests for updated contact information for Fairfax County retirees. Due to privacy considerations, we are **unable** to provide them with that sort of requested information for their mailings. If you are already a member, or interested in becoming a member, please keep them informed of address and phone number updates. For information on membership or to change your address, contact:

**Fairfax County Fire & Rescue
Retirement Association**

Tom Simcoe, 703-455-2001
mouse260@msn.com
Annual Dues is \$24.00

**Fairfax County Retired
Police Association**

James Covell, 703-426-2781
COVEL648@erols.com
Annual Dues: \$15.00

**Fairfax County
Retired Employees Association**

Dorris Medlin 703-256-6379
Annual Dues is \$5.00
Lifetime Membership is \$50.00

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e-mail: *retire@fairfaxcounty.gov* ♦ internet: *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/retbrd/*